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Persons with Disabilities:
Literature Review of the Factors Affecting Employment and Labour Force Transitions

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by
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June 1998

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Abstract

This report presents a review of the literature and Internet resources on factors associated with the transitions of people with disabilities into and out of the labour market.

The report opens with a section on contemporary ways of thinking about and measuring disability. Then it looks at a range of broad societal trends. It provides general social demographics on disability and explores recent labour market trends that affect the labour market status of all citizens. Factors that were researched which are specific to the employment of people with disabilities include the presence, severity, cause and age of onset of disability. Selected demographic characteristics of people with disabilities that are pertinent to employment are analyzed, including age, gender, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographic region, occupational classification, education, training and other qualifications. Support issues specific to disability are examined as well, such as access to rehabilitation and other support services, the need for and access to job accommodations, and employer attitudes about disability.

Concerning disability and employment, the research finds that people with disabilities are much less likely to be employed and earn less than people without disabilities. Some people with disabilities also fear losing income support and don't look for employment.

Employability of persons with disabilities depends on the severity and the type of the disability—the less severe, the more likely the person is to have a job. People with work-caused disabilities tend to participate more actively in the labour market than people with other disabilities. The women are more likely to be unemployed than the men. The older the person with disabilities, the less likely he or she is to participate in the labour market, particularly if he or she was educated before the disability onset. People with disabilities in the Prairie Provinces are more likely to be employed than those in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Quebec. People with disabilities are more likely to be employed in agricultural, service and clerical occupations than in managerial and professional occupations; some discrimination has been documented. People with disabilities who are from a visible-minority background are even more likely to have difficulty in the labour market.

Employer attitudes are critical as to whether people with disabilities can secure employment. Procurement of work-related supports is a factor than influences the labour force participation and self-perception of ability to work.

This report is part of a set of two research studies on employment disability transitions which includes:

Persons with Disabilities

- *Literature Review of the Factors Affecting Employment and Labour Force Transitions*
- *Disability-Status Transitions and Labour Force Activity Transitions—Analysis Based on the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.*

Résumé

Ce rapport présente une revue des ressources documentaires et Internet sur les facteurs associés à la transition des personnes handicapées vers le marché du travail et à l'extérieur de celui-ci.

La première partie porte sur la façon contemporaine de percevoir et de mesurer l'incapacité. Le rapport examine ensuite un éventail des grandes tendances sociales. Puis, il fournit des données démographiques et sociales sur l'incapacité et examine les tendances récentes du marché du travail qui touchent la situation professionnelle de tous les citoyens. Les facteurs qui ont fait l'objet de recherche et qui sont spécifiques à l'embauche des personnes handicapées comprennent la présence, la gravité, la cause de l'incapacité et l'âge auquel elle est a apparue. Certaines caractéristiques démographiques des personnes handicapées qui sont pertinentes à l'emploi sont analysées, y compris l'âge, le sexe, la race et l'origine ethnique, le statut socio-économique, la région économique, la classification par professions, les études, la formation et autres qualifications. Les questions de soutien particulières aux personnes handicapées sont examinées ainsi que l'accès à la réhabilitation et autres services de soutien, le besoin d'adaptation du lieu de travail et l'accès à celui-ci, et l'attitude des employeurs vis-à-vis des personnes handicapées.

Pour ce qui est de l'incapacité et de l'emploi, les résultats de la recherche indiquent que les personnes handicapées ont moins de chance d'être embauchées et gagnent moins que les personnes non handicapées. Certaines craignent aussi de perdre leur soutien de revenu et ne cherchent donc pas d'emploi.

L'employabilité des personnes handicapées dépend de la gravité et du genre d'incapacité, moins l'incapacité est grave, plus il y de chance d'emploi. Les personnes devenues handicapées dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions semblent participer plus activement au marché du travail que les personnes ayant d'autres incapacités. Il semble que les femmes sont plus susceptibles d'être en chômage que les hommes. Plus la personne handicapée est âgée, moins elle participe au marché du travail. Particulièrement si elle avait un certain niveau de scolarité avant l'apparition de l'incapacité. Les personnes handicapées des provinces des Prairies sont plus susceptibles de travailler que celles de Terre-Neuve, du Nouveau Brunswick et du Québec. Les personnes handicapées sont plus susceptibles de travailler dans le domaine agricole, dans des professions du secteur des services et dans des emplois de bureau que dans des postes de gestion ou des professions libérales; une certaine discrimination a été documentée. Les personnes handicapées faisant partie d'une minorité visible sont encore plus susceptibles de rencontrer des difficultés sur le marché du travail.

L'attitude des employeurs est crucial pour ce qui est des chances qu'ont les personnes handicapées de se trouver un emploi. L'obtention d'un soutien à l'emploi est un facteur qui influe sur la participation au marché du travail ainsi que sur la façon dont la personne perçoit sa propre capacité de travailler.

Ce rapport fait partie d'une série de deux études de recherche sur la transition des personnes handicapées dans la perspective de l'emploi, qui comprend:

Persons with Disabilities

- *Literature Review of the Factors Affecting Employment and Labour Force Transitions*
- *Disability-Status Transitions and Labour Force Activity Transitions—Analysis Based on the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*

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1. Introduction

This report presents a review of the literature and Internet resources on factors associated with the transitions of people with disabilities into and out of the Canadian labour market. Comparatively little has been written on labour market transitions and disability *per se;* much of what has been written on transitions focuses on the school-to-work transitions of young people with disabilities or on transitions between various components of the health-care system. However, a considerable body of literature has emerged on factors that have a bearing on the employment of people with disabilities more generally. The research drew from that literature on the assumption that the factors which increase or decrease the likelihood of employment play a role in determining whether people with disabilities will make transitions into and out of the labour force.

Selected literature on factors that increase the chances that people will become disabled (i.e., movement into disability status) was also surveyed. However, a focus was placed on socio-demographic factors; a more exhaustive review would have required examining literature in medical-science, health-promotion, mental-health and rehabilitation fields, an undertaking beyond the intended scope of the report.

As background information on disability, the report opens with a section on contemporary ways of thinking about and measuring disability. It provides a brief overview of Canadian statistical sources that can be drawn upon for information about issues of employment and disability.

The report then looks at a range of broad societal trends. It provides general social demographics on disability and explores recent labour market trends that affect the labour market status of all citizens, on the assumption that these factors affect people with and without disabilities and need to be taken into account in any study on labour market transitions. Factors that were researched which are specific to the employment of people with disabilities include the presence, severity, cause and age of onset of disability. Selected demographic characteristics of people with disabilities that are pertinent to employment were analysed, including age, gender, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographic region, occupational classification, education, training and other qualifications. Support issues specific to disability were examined as well,

such as access to rehabilitation and other support services, the need for and access to job accommodations, and employer attitudes about disability. The report concludes with a summary of findings.

2. Ways of Thinking About and Measuring Disability

2.1 Ways of Thinking About Disability

Society's ways of thinking about and defining disability have a major influence on the social and economic participation of people with disabilities, including their employment. These perspectives shape social policy and legislation and determine the kinds of social programs, support services, interventions and social protections to which people have access.

The concept of disability is not universal or static. Concepts of disability, handicap and rehabilitation that are used in Canada emerged in particular historical circumstances in Europe. As can be seen through the differences in the major measurement tools used in Canada, definitions of disability are not universally agreed upon even in the same time and place. In many cultures, "disability" as a recognized category does not exist; "disabled" as a social identity is only now being created in most developing countries through surveys, research projects, rehabilitation programs, and government policy (Whyte and Ingstad, 1995).

Even when a discreet definition is agreed upon there is wide diversity within the group of people perceived to have a disability. Various forms of disability that have been identified include limitations in mental and physical functioning, speech, hearing, vision, and emotional well-being. Many people have several disabilities. Furthermore, there is high variance is how these limitations are experienced, their severity, duration, and the impact on people's everyday experiences.

In Canada as in other countries there have been important shifts in thinking about disability over the years. Until the mid-1970s disability was generally conceived as an individual pathology requiring treatment, rehabilitation and passive care. Two main perspectives shared the pathological view of disability. One was the biomedical model, in which biological sciences formed the basis for diagnosis of disability and provision of treatments and services (The Roeher Institute, 1996). To this day, in many situations a medical diagnosis of disability determines who is deemed to be legitimately disabled and therefore who can gain access to programs and services. For example, a medical diagnosis is still used to determine if a person is "disabled", or "unemployable" for the purposes of access to income security programs (e.g., welfare, Canada

Pension Plan Disability benefit; Workers' Compensation short-term and long-term disability pensions). Medical diagnosis is also required in order to access credits under the Canadian tax system.

The functional approach to disability also characterizes disability as an individual pathology. Problems associated with disability are seen to be caused by the disability or impairment. Within this model the route to overcoming these problems is to increase a person's skills and abilities to function as "normally" as possible (The Roeher Institute, 1996).

Services responding to the needs of people with disabilities based on these perspectives focus on interventions at the individual level. They aim to provide for basic sustenance in the event of disability (e.g., income replacement and support) and to strengthen individual capacity to participate in society (e.g., vocational and therapeutic services) (Crawford, 1998).

Attitudes about disability have changed significantly in the past thirty years, but traces of the bio-medical and functional models of disability still underlie societal attitudes and welfare and health care programs and services. For example, social policy still in many cases frames people with disabilities as unemployable and unproductive. As such, many people with disabilities continue to be excluded from making a living yet are given the benefit of being treated as "deserving" of charity and social programs (The Roeher Institute, 1996).

Recently there has been a philosophical reorientation to disability toward a citizenship-rights approach. In 1985 the human rights of people with disabilities in Canada were firmly established with the guarantees of equality for persons with mental or physical disabilities through the Canadian Charter of Rights Freedoms (The Roeher Institute, 1996). Since then, a rights perspective of disability has been reflected in a number of government publications, reports, and policies.[1] A citizenship-rights approach recognizes the place and role of persons with disabilities in society, and the organizations that represent them, in shaping public policy and in contributing to civil society (Crawford, 1998b).

[1] This is clearly evident in the submissions to the recent Scott Task Force on disability issues, in the Task Force's recent report, in the ongoing work of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons, and in the Mainstream 1992 review of services affecting Canadians with disabilities, to mention but a few indicators of the shift in thinking.

Related to the rights approach, disability and handicap are now being conceived as the products not only of individual impairment but also of environments and societal institutions that introduce barriers to socio-economic participation. The focus has shifted from trying to "fix" problems in individuals to measures such as barrier-free architecture and accommodations in workplaces in order to make communities more inclusive; to create provisions like the Charter, human rights legislation and Employment Equity which ensure individual and group rights; and to remove disincentives and barriers in social services, such as welfare and labour market programming, to enable social and economic participation (Crawford, 1998b).

2.2 Ways of Measuring Disability

Statistics from various sources in Canada are used for general information about people with disabilities and for insight into factors affecting their situation in the labour market.[2]

While the available statistical resources offer useful information in the area of employment and disability, certain limitations and inconsistencies between them should be taken into account. In Canada, three major population surveys provide information about disability and employment. A recent review of these data sources by Crawford (1998) was used to outline the ways these population surveys differ in the way they define disability, and in the way they measure disability. Their different design approaches make it difficult to establish comparability in disability statistics. The surveys include:[3]

- *The Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS):* the most comprehensive and widely used disability specific database in Canada, HALS was a follow-up to the national Census conducted in 1986 and 1991. HALS provides information pertaining to persons who have a disability such as access to aids and devices, types and frequency of personal support used, job accommodations required, issues concerning transportation and housing. In addition it

[2] In some instances the present report drew from US data, particularly in areas such as race and disability where there has historically been a gap in Canadian research. In part the gap is because, until recently, Canadian statistical tools have not included data for race/ethnicity *and* disability. It should be kept in mind that while US data is included in this report because it has some bearing on the labour force status of people with disabilities, the US and Canadian contexts are not identical. US data should be considered suggestive rather than definitive about circumstances which may be prevail in Canada.

[3] The General Social Survey, Cycle 11 on Social and Community Support (1996) was also analysed. However, the survey includes only 847 working-age respondents who reported an activity restriction at home, school or work because of a long-term physical condition or health problem. This number is too small for anything but the most general level of analysis.

provides general household and personal information such as total personal and family income, labour force status, family size, geographic region of respondents, dwelling type, education level, and a range of other data. HALS can be used to compare selected personal and household information of persons with and without disabilities. There is considerable confidence in both general-level findings and analysis of issues pertaining to sub-samples with HALS due to its large sample size.(Statistics Canada, 1994b).

- *The National Population Health Survey (NPHS):* includes a General Data file and Health Data file. It provides data on the economic, social, demographic, occupational and environmental determinants/correlates of health. Limited demographic and socio-economic information and selected data on health-related issues, gathered from all members of the 26,429 households sampled, make up the General Data File. The Health Data File is based on the responses of one person aged twelve or older in the households surveyed. Although it offers a smaller sample size than the General file, it features more in-depth questions on health determinants/correlates. The first cycle of the NPHS was in June, August and November 1994 and March 1995. It is a longitudinal survey, conducted at two-year intervals. Follow-up interviews with a "panel" of respondents allow for the tracking of changes in their socio-economic and health status between intervals (Statistics Canada, 1996).

- *The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID):* a longitudinal household survey conducted by Statistics Canada. It is designed to track changes in the economic situation of individuals and families over time, as well as the determinants of their economic well-being. The target population for SLID is all Canadians aged 16 years and over, excluding people in the Yukon or Northwest Territories, residents of institutions, persons living on Reserves, and full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces living in barracks (Statistics Canada, 1997).

2.2.1 Differing definitions

Definitions of disability vary among the statistical tools that provide information about employment and disability. HALS' approach to identifying persons as having disabilities is based on the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH), approach – "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being" (World Health Organization, 1980.)[4] According to HALS there were 3.5 million Canadians aged 15 and older living in households who had disabilities in 1991.

[4] HALS also has a disability variable that roughly approximates the definition used in the Employment Equity Act. In the latter context persons with a "disability" are people who have a disability according to the ICIDH approach and who face a range of specific barriers to participation in the work force.

In contrast, the NPHS classifies individuals as having a "restriction of activity" if they answer positively any one of a series of questions that probe whether they are limited in the amount of activity they can do at home, school, work, or in other activities. They are also asked if they have any long-term disabilities or handicaps. The NPHS Health File has health-status indicators which are similar to the disability-screening questions of HALS. These questions probe limitations in activities of daily living. However, the NPHS health-status indicators have not been used in that survey as a basis for formally classifying respondents as having "disabilities." Accordingly, the total count of the disabled/restricted population is quite different than that of HALS: 4.8 million persons aged 15 and older in households (excluding the Yukon and Northwest Territories).

SLID uses an approach similar to the NPHS for identifying respondents as having disabilities. However, SLID's total count of the non-institutionalized population with disabilities/handicaps in 1994 was 2.5 million persons (aged 16 and older, excluding the Yukon and Northwest Territories).

2.2.2 Measuring disability and labour market issues

Because they differ in how they define disability, there is variance between these research tools in statistical findings in the number of people with disabilities and in percentages who are employed or unemployed. For example, HALS 1991 data indicate that among people with disabilities 48.2% were employed at the time of the survey, while the NPHS (1994) found that among Canadians with activity restrictions 53.2% were employed. Although the percentages are similar, the total frequencies are significantly different (e.g., 1.1 million employed people with disabilities according to HALS and 1.8 million according to the NPHS). These discrepancies raise questions about how disability is perceived, the accuracy with which issues pertaining to disability are measured, and the ways that perspectives on disability frame the research process. These issues become quite problematic when research draws from several of these data sources.

Each of the tools differs in the kind of disability-specific information presented. In the effort to identify factors that have a bearing on the transitions of people with disabilities into and out of the labour market and in and out of disability, each of these tools has different strengths and limitations.

HALS is the most widely used instrument for determining labour market status of people with disabilities. It is based on a large disability sample (22,763 working-age respondents), which results in high confidence levels even in multi-level cross-tabulations. Using HALS comparisons can be drawn between persons with and without disabilities in areas such as labour force status (i.e., employed, unemployed, not in the labour force), occupational classification, employment earnings, low income status (i.e., "poverty line"), work history, and highest level of education.

In addition, HALS contains considerable detail on matters that are pertinent to persons with disabilities and factors which have a bearing on their participation in the labour force. These include three general areas of particular relevance:

1. Disability and work

- changes in work due to disability
- work-related limitations
- where employed when onset of work limitations began
- difficulties in changing job or in job advancement
- specific accommodations needed in the workplace and whether these are available
- access to work-related training and the barriers encountered
- perceived employer discrimination and the actions taken in response
- participation in volunteer work
- whether respondents consider their disability to completely prevent employment
- reasons why not looking for work (including environmental and social barriers and disincentives)

2. Disability and education

- current full/part-time student status
- type of school attended and course work taken in the reference year
- type of degree, diploma or certificate sought
- accommodations required in the educational setting
- onset of disability in relation to school-leaving age
- reasons wny schooling was interrupted, delayed or discontinued
- details on educational history

3. Details about the experience of having a disability

- nature and degree of disability
- types of technical aids and devices used and or needed
- out-of-pocket expenses for disability-related supports
- recreation, lifestyle and the barriers to community participation that are encountered
- transportation usage
- disability-related supports needed by and barriers encountered
- need for and access to disability-related modifications of the personal home
- literacy level and reasons for not taking literacy upgrading
- mental health indicators and supports available
- disability-related income sources.

Such statistical information is extremely useful in examining factors that affect the labour force status of people with disabilities. But HALS in limited in its capacity to shed light on labour force transitions: it offers a statistical "snapshot" of a moment in time; HALS does not capture the fluidity of movement into and out of disability status that a longitudinal survey can capture. Nor does HALS reveal much about labour market fluidity (e.g., persons who are employed one year but not the subsequent year). It is difficult to use HALS to determine the duration of unbroken and interrupted periods of employment, unemployment and labour force inactivity. HALS does not tell us the number of jobs at which people are working at any given moment, or in any given year. The variables in the public-use data file on training and on occupational classification are general and lacking in detail. Moreover, HALS is conducted infrequently, which has resulted in the most recent information (1990-91) being quite dated.

The NPHS includes census-like variables on labour force status, occupational classification, industrial classification, total family income, income adequacy, main source of family income, highest level of education and current educational activities. It includes a range of questions specific to employment, such as duration of continuous work, labour force activity of people attending school, number of jobs held in past year and job-overlap, type of working hours for first through third jobs, number of working hours for first through third jobs, and reasons for not

working. On these questions comparisons can be drawn between persons with and without disabilities/activity restrictions.

The NPHS has reasonably large sub-samples of working-age respondents with activity restrictions (6,941 respondents on the General file and 2,796 on the Health file). It also features a range of informative variables on the current/recent labour market activity of respondents, their occupations and industrial distribution, and their household incomes. These features allow for comparative analysis of the general situation of people with and without activity restrictions in the labour force, in the educational system and in the economy more generally. The fact that the NPHS is a longitudinal survey means it can be used to track changes in labour market activity, income patterns and disability status over a period of years.

However, the NPHS has relatively little information specific to issues and barriers experienced by persons with disabilities. The most useful information in this regard are several variables on "home care" services, the need for such support, and other variables on kinds of health-related services utilized in the reference year. Furthermore, because the sub-sample of respondents with activity restrictions is quite limited as compared with HALS, especially on the Health file, cross-tabulations quickly run into difficulty in terms of coefficients of variation depending on the level of detail sought: the findings may not be reliable (or releasable). The NPHS lacks labour market information specific to disability, such as job accommodations needed/available and other support issues. In addition, it is not precise in terms of income sources. For example it lacks information on personal as opposed to household income, conflates household income from Employment Insurance, Workers Compensation and Welfare, does not consider anything but a household's main source of income (i.e., has no detail on respondents' personal income level or income sources), and does not provide specific information on disability-related income sources.

The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) is another major data source that provides some information on disability issues. It is organized according to several major themes and sub-themes with numerous variables on demographics (respondents' age, sex, marital status, marital history, ethno cultural characteristics, the number of children in the respondent's family and other family-level information, geographic location and geographic mobility). It has a rich store of variables concerning labour force participation, and questions on total personal and family

income and income sources. Educational variables cover highest level of education attained and the general details of respondents' educational history.

SLID has little specific information pertaining to disability, however. It does have a few questions on the age of onset of the respondent's disability, the duration of the disability and whether the disability a) makes it difficult to change jobs or get a better job; b) completely prevents work; c) makes it difficult to work less weeks than at present; or d) makes it difficult to work more weeks than at present. SLID also has information on the total number of respondents' household members who are aged sixteen and over with an activity-limiting condition (disability) and/or who are completely prevented from work because of their condition. In that SLID is a longitudinal survey it allows for tracking of movement of respondents into and out of disability status. However, SLID provides no information on the nature of the person's disability aside from the fact that it affects activities at home, school or in other activities. While the data for these activity domains are reported separately, the sub-sample sizes are quite small making it difficult to perform analysis at anything but the most general level.

SLID understates the prevalence of disability as compared with HALS and the NPHS. This may in part be a result of selecting age sixteen rather than fifteen as the low-end age-group cut-off for reporting purposes, although this is probably not the only factor that accounts for the difference. Another explanatory factor may be the context of SLID and the impact of the interview context on respondents' perceptions of their disability status. SLID focuses on issues of employment. The questions on disability are answered within the context of an employment-related survey. The context may have the effect of under-representing people whose experience of disability occurs more frequently or intensely outside rather than inside the workplace and who do not feel that such information is pertinent to the survey (i.e., they under-report disability because they do not think this is relevant if not specifically work-related). Like the NPHS Health File, SLID's sub-sample of persons with disabilities is quite small (3,394 aged 16 and older in 1994); presently SLID's usefulness may be confined to analysis at the national and regional (e.g., Atlantic Canada; Prairies) levels. A more in-depth analysis of SLID is being conducted as a complementary exercise to the present report.

3. Broad Societal Trends

3.1 General Demographics of Disability

3.1.1 A rising share of the population

Persons with disabilities represent a large and growing segment of the Canadian population, increasing from 13 to nearly 16 per cent between the 1986 and 1991 post-censal HALS surveys on disability (Statistics Canada, 1994a). The more recent National Population Health Survey (NPHS, 1994-95) indicates that 20 per cent of Canadians in the non-institutional population are restricted in their activities because of a long-term health condition or disability.

Disability takes many different forms, which, along with the environments and social structures with which a person interacts, has an impact on their employment and other experiences. There is wide diversity both in type and severity of disability among people with disabilities. In Canada in 1991 HALS showed that the majority (60%) had a disability which involved limitations to mobility and agility. Hearing (13%), seeing (4.8%) and speaking (4.2%) limitations were the next-most common disabling conditions. 17.5% reported some other type of disability (HRDC, 1997).

Severity of disability is measured by the degree of loss of function, and the number of different disability types experienced by a person. By far, mild and moderate disabilities are the most prevalent (52.3% and 32.2% of the population with disabilities, respectively), while severe disabilities occur less frequently (15.5%). The proportion of people reporting mild disabilities is increasing, accounting for much of the increase in prevalence of disability between 1986 and 1991. In this period the proportion of people with "mild" disabilities increased from 51.6% to 54.3% of the working-age population with disabilities (Fawcett, 1996).

3.1.2 Variance in prevalence of disability by geographic region

The prevalence of disability varies considerably from province to province. In 1991, Nova Scotia had the largest share of the population with disabilities (21%) compared with only 10% in Newfoundland. (Table 1) For adults (age 15 +), most of the disability-rate differences involve persons with a mild level of disability, ranging from 5% to 11%, depending on the province. In contrast, the percentage of the working-age population with a severe level of disability ranges

only between a high of 5% (Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan) to a low of 3% (Quebec, Alberta, Newfoundland).

Table 1 Prevalence of disability across Canada (as a per cent of the total provincial population)

Newfoundland	10.40%
Prince Edward Island	17%
Nova Scotia	21%
New Brunswick	18%
Quebec	12%
Ontario	16%
Manitoba	18%
Saskatchewan	19%
Alberta	17%
British Columbia	17%
Canada	16%

Source: Statistics Canada, *A Portrait of Persons with Disabilities*, Target groups project, Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1995. Table 1.4

3.1.3 Increase of disability as people age

As people age they are more likely to have a disability. HALS 1991 data shows that among working age persons, those in the oldest category, aged 55-64, 28% identified as having a disability, compared to 16% of persons aged 35-54 and only 8% of those between the ages of 15 to 34 (HRDC, 1997).

As people with disabilities age, the level of employment drops significantly. For example, 54.1% aged 15 to 34 were employed in 1991, compared with 57% of persons with disabilities and aged 35-54 and only 27.9% of those aged 55-64 (Statistics Canada, 1995).

3.1.4 Similarity in prevalence of disability across gender lines

Among working-age adults, the rate of disability is roughly similar regardless of gender. The prevalence of disability increases steadily and at about the same rate for both males and females throughout the working-age years. (Table 2) In the retirement years a comparatively greater share of females have disabilities.

Table 2 Prevalence of disability by age and gender

	Percentage of age group	
Age group	Male	Female
15-34	7.8	8.2
35-54	13.9	14.0
55-64	27.8	26.0
75-74	36.8	37.0
75-84	53.3	59.1
85 and older	79.6	85.5

Source: Statistics Canada, *A Portrait of Persons with Disabilities*, Target groups project, Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1995. Table 1.1

3.1.5 Unclear links with race in Canada

In the United States, disability rates for many racial/ethnic minorities, including indigenous peoples, are higher than those of white Americans (with the exception of some Asian and Pacific Island groups). This is supported by many studies. (Bowe, 1984; Hayes-Bautista, 1992; Thornhill and Hosang, 1988; US Department of Education NIDRR, 1992; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1985a, 1985b, 1991; Smart and Walls, 1997; Pichette, Berven, Menz and La Fromboise, 1997).

Canada is populated by a racially and ethnically diverse population. The face of the population is continually changing as immigration and other patterns shift over time. However, the present literature review was unable to identify published information on the links between race/ethnicity and disability in Canada. A cross-tabulation was performed on the basis of the NPHS General data file. It was found that the prevalence of activity restrictions in the working-age immigrant

population is lower than in the rest of the working-age population (14.3 compared with 18.2%). The lower prevalence rate may be a function of Canada's immigration law, which restricts the access of people who immigration authorities consider likely to place significant demand on the health and social services system. It was also found that the rate of employment was lower among working-age immigrants with activity restrictions (49.3%) than among other working-age persons with activity restrictions (53.9%).

3.1.6 Greater incidence of low income among people with disabilities

Persons with disabilities are poorer than other Canadians, women with disabilities particularly so (Canada, June 1990; Statistics Canada, 1990; Statistics Canada, 1994a; Statistics Canada, 1995. Adults with disabilities are more likely than others to have annual incomes of less that $10,000 (55.7% compared with 44.4%) and are less likely than others to have annual incomes over $35,000 per year (8% compared with 12.1%) (The Roeher Institute, 1993). Consequently, they are more likely than others to be relying on the social security system for personal and family income.[5] In fact, 1986 HALS data shows that while 24.9% of people without disabilities report no labour market income, more than double the number of people with disabilities (54.8%) report this. Persons with disabilities who do work bring in a lower employment income on average. Only 8% make between $20,000 and $30,000, compared to 14.9% of those without disabilities, and only 7.6% make over $30,000 compared to 15.1% of people without disabilities (Hum and Simpson, 1993; see also Statistics Canada, 1994).

3.1.7 Lower educational attainment of people with disabilities

In 1991 working age people with disabilities lagged significantly behind the non-disabled population in educational attainment (Table 3). At the highest attainment level, only 5.9% of those with disabilities had a university degree compared to 13.6% of those without disabilities. Even more disturbing, 19.7% of working age people with disabilities had only a primary level of education, compared to 8.1% of persons without disabilities. The following table compares education attainment of working-age persons with and without disabilities.

[5] More than 556,000 persons 12 and over with activity restrictions, or 11.6%, relied on social security programs in 1994 as their main source of household income, compared with 5.8% of the rest of the population the same age (NPHS-Health microdata file). Some 845,000 people with disabilities received income for their disability from one or more social programs (25.6%) at some point in 1991. This may not have been their main source of household income, however.

Table 3 Educational attainment of working age persons with and without disabilities

Highest level of schooling	Persons with disabilities	Without disabilities
0 to 8 years	19.7%	8.1%
Secondary	44.9%	43.1%
Some post-secondary	10.8%	12.9%
Certificate/diploma	18.7%	22.3%
University degree	5.9%	13.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, *Adults with Disabilities: Their Employment and Education Characteristics*, Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1993. Tables 4.4 and 5.2

Educational attainment increased for people with disabilities between 1986 and 1991, however, accounting for more than 1/3 of the increased labour force participation by this group during this time period (Table 4).

Table 4 Educational attainment in 1986 compared to 1991 for people with disabilities

Educational attainment	1986	1991
Primary or less	28.9%	19.7%
Some secondary	27.8%	27.0%
Secondary	9.4%	13.5%
Trades	10.3%	11.9%
Some post secondary	8.5%	10.2%
College	10.0%	11.9%
University	5.1%	5.9%

Source: Fawcett, 1996.

While primary and secondary education are free in all provinces and territories, trade schools, colleges and universities are associated with varying levels of cost to students. The higher the educational attainment, the greater the cost. Some assistance programs do exist in the form of government loans, bursaries and scholarships. But as post-secondary education funding arrangements shift students are seeing rises in tuition fees. Many are graduating with large debts. As these changes are recent we do not yet know what the impact will be on enrolment and educational attainment in the population in general and among persons with disabilities.

3.2 Broad Labour Market Trends

The Canadian economy, and consequently the labour market is in a time of transition that is tied strongly to global changes. Finance Minister Paul Martin (1994) points to three global trends that impact the Canadian economy: globalization, the growth of newly industrializing countries, and the information economy. As a result of these trends, participants in the Canadian labour force are experiencing a new set of conditions and workplace realities that open up and restrict opportunities for them in new ways. The literature suggests that both global competition and a move on the part of businesses and government to downsize will broadly impact the labour force. Some of the impacts include changes in the sector of job growth, new skill requirements for workers, a feminization of labour and changing work arrangements. For some workers the negative impacts of changes are compounded because they live in economically disadvantaged regions, or have been traditionally marginalized in the labour force because of their race, gender, or disability status.

3.2.1 Global competition increasing

Global competition and the opening up of a freer marker economy mean that Canadian firms now compete more intensely with foreign competitors as well as other Canadian companies. The operation of foreign companies in Canada is expected to increase in the near future. The signing of NAFTA removed trade and business barriers between Canada, the US and Mexico. Agreements such as the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investments propose to remove trade and business operation restrictions even more widely around the world. Foreign companies often have lower wage rates, different work practices and a greater use of technology. This could have a number of impacts on Canadian workers. Advocates of these agreements promise that there will be employment and economic growth as Canada opens up for business to foreign companies. On the other hand, both foreign and Canadian companies may choose to operate in countries with less restrictive environmental and labour laws. Canadians may see a decline in employment levels, or a decline in wages, job security and benefits. As Human Resources Development Canada (1997) states, "Globalization marks the end of an era in which people with modest education and technical skills earned top dollar in forestry and mining, resource processing [and] government" (p. 4).

To some degree this may already be happening. So far the impact of restructuring is more dramatic in developed countries, where working conditions are increasingly reflecting those of developing countries. In first world countries there is an increase in low-waged, low-status part-time jobs which are insecure and offer few benefits. The Economic Council of Canada calls these "bad jobs" and predicts the highest rates of employment growth is this kind of work (Broad, 1995).

3.2.2 Greater prevalence of downsizing

There is an increase in unemployment and underemployment as businesses downsize and shed labour to reduce the costs of production. In some situations workers are replaced due to technological advancements, in others, part-time or contract labour replace full time workers. Aspects of production may be farmed out to homeworkers or factories in countries with cheaper labour and less restrictive environmental laws. According the International Labour Organization 30% of the world's labour force is either unemployed or underemployed (Broad, 1995).

3.2.3 Changing sectors of job growth

Because of structural change and globalization there is job loss in traditional resource and manufacturing jobs, and gains in services such as tourism and business services. The percentage of goods produced by Canadians in natural resources, agriculture, manufacturing and construction dropped from 60% in the 1940s to 25% in the 1990s. Now most jobs are in traditional services such as hair salons, retail stores, hotels, restaurants and movie theatres, and non-traditional services such as air travel, trucking, radio and television, banking and real estate, advertising, consulting, law, science and computing, education, health care and government. (Human Resources Development Canada, 1997). HRDC expects this trend to continue between 1995 and 2000, as Table 5 demonstrates (1998).

Table 5 Occupations of low and high growth, 1995 to 2000

Occupations anticipated to have the most openings between 1995 and 2000	Occupations anticipated to have the fewest openings between 1995 and 2000
retail salespersons	optometrists, chiropractors, other health diagnosticians
cleaners	judges, lawyers
food/beverage servers	public administration managers
child care/home support workers	press operators
motor vehicle/transit drivers	other trades
food counter/kitchen helpers	elemental medical/ hospital assistants
finance/insurance clerks	librarians, archivists, conservators
chefs/cooks	primary production managers
school teachers/counsellors	mine service, Oil and Gas drillers
secretaries	communication managers
	supervisors, mining, oil and gas

3.2.4 Changing skill requirements

New technologies are replacing mass production, new products and processes are being developed, and new technology is being applied to old tasks. Some jobs are disappearing while others are created. These developments are beneficial to some workers; however, many workers find themselves replaced by technology. Products and job skills quickly become outdated, so that those with computer, math and literacy skills are favoured. Workers are being pushed to higher levels of self-exploitation as they are required to prove they are still needed (Broad, 1995; Human Resources Development Canada, 1997).

Technological skills and advanced education are becoming minimum requirements for obtaining and retaining employment, while jobs in areas such as manufacturing are becoming scarce. This will have a particular impact on individuals with limited literacy skills, such as those with learning disabilities and others with relatively low education who have been working in manufacturing. Many chose this type of work because it was compatible with their disability or educational attainment. Many workers who have been in this sector are now being laid off, and must compete in the job market with limited math and computer skills (Clausen, 1997).

Human Resources Development Canada (1998) suggests that to qualify for nearly 5,500,000 new jobs between 1995 and 2000, workers will be expected to have minimum skills gained from 1 to

4 years of secondary education plus two years of on the job or skill training. The second largest employment area, with over 4,000,000 new jobs requires 2 to 3 years of post-secondary education at a community college, trade school or CEGEP; or 2 to 4 years of apprenticeship; or 3 to 4 years of secondary school plus more than two years of on the job training, skills training, or specific work experience. In short, today, 45% of new jobs require more than a grade twelve education; by the year 2000, 60% will. It has been estimated that half of all new jobs will require at least 17 years of education or training. (Human Resources Development Canada, 1997).

3.2.5 Increasing feminization of labour

The feminization of labour refers in part to the increase in women's participation in the labour force in the past century, and their being ghettoed in the service sector, in low waged, low status work. In 1991, 71% of working women and only 30% of men were in teaching, nursing, clerical, sales and service. Feminization refers also to the fact that, despite a demand for more education and training, most labour market growth for many women and men is in work that takes on characteristics of housewifery – low status, low paid and low skilled (Broad, 1995).

3.2.6 Changing work arrangements

Work arrangements have been changing over the years. In the past Canadians could expect to work in full time permanent jobs. In recent years there has been an expansion of part-time, short-term, contract and other sorts of casual labour, despite the fact that over one third of part time workers want full time work. According to Statistics Canada and the Economic Council of Canada, non-standard or contingent labour now makes up two fifths of the Canadian labour market (Broad, 1995). Casual labour is the most rapidly growing type of labour. The proportion of Canadians who work full time is declining, while the numbers who work part time is increasing. In 1995, 86% of full year workers worked full-time, compared to 89% in 1990, 90% in 1980 and 89% in 1973. At the same time, the number who worked part-time on a full year basis rose 20% throughout the year, to almost double the number who worked part time in 1980 (Statistics Canada, 1998a).

3.2.7 Different geography, different economies

The degree to which workers are impacted by these changes depends to some degree on whether they live in the country or city, and on their province of residence. For example, in Canada's four largest metropolitan centres, retail salespersons and sales clerks are the leading job groups for all workers (Statistics Canada, 1998a).

Labour market conditions vary by region in Canada, with unemployment higher in provinces such as Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island and lower in Alberta and Ontario. The kinds of jobs available also vary by province. For example, according to the 1996 Census the top job held by men in Newfoundland and PEI was that of fishers, in the Prairie provinces it was farmers, in Nova Scotia, Ontario and BC, it was retail salespersons. Women tend to cluster in retail sales and secretarial work, regardless of where they live (Statistics Canada, 1998a).

The following (Table 6) are labour market characteristics for working-age adults in various Canadian provinces for February, 1998 according to Statistics Canada (1998b).

Table 6 Labour force participation, February 1998

Province/territory	Participation rate %	Employment rate %	Unemployment rate %
Canada	65.0	59.4	8.6
Newfoundland	52.9	43.7	17.5
PEI	65.3	56.4	13.6
Nova Scotia	61.4	55.0	10.5
New Brunswick	61.0	53.2	12.7
Quebec	61.8	55.3	10.6
Ontario	66.5	61.4	7.6
Manitoba	66.7	62.8	5.8
Saskatchewan	67.0	63.3	5.5
Alberta	72.0	68.2	5.4
British Columbia	64.5	58.2	9.7

3.2.8 Race- and gender-inequity

Historically, certain groups have been disadvantaged in the labour market and are more sensitive to changes and fluctuations that disadvantage workers. Four groups have been identified as disadvantaged for the purposed of employment equity regulations, including women, racial minorities, aboriginal peoples and people with disabilities.

Racism continues to be a barrier to employment. Despite Employment Equity and other provisions, people from visible minority and Aboriginal backgrounds continue to struggle with a long history of racism, colonization and exclusion. Racism is still a daily reality for many from these groups; they face disadvantages in obtaining equal educational and employment opportunities, despite provisions in Canadian law to guarantee these rights.

Gender is also still an issue, although the gender gap in labour market participation for women and men in general has been steadily closing between 1980 and 1995. While overall labour force participation rates increased slightly between 1986 and 1991, males' participation has been declining because of a trend towards early retirement, whereas females' participation has been on the increase since 1960. This trend began to slow down in 1990 as the country entered a period of economic recession Fawcett, 1996). The average weeks worked by men and by women respectively in 1980 were 42.6 and 38.4 weeks. In 1995 the figures were 42.4 weeks for males and 41.1 weeks for females (Statistics Canada, 1998e).

However, the types of occupations held by men and women are still as gendered as they were in the 1950s. The ten most common jobs for men in 1996 were: truck drivers, retail salespersons, janitors, retail trade managers, farmers, sales representatives (wholesale trade), motor vehicle mechanics, material handlers, carpenters and construction-trade helpers. These account for 20% of all jobs held by men. The ten most common jobs for women in 1996 were: retail salespersons, secretaries, cashiers, registered nurses, accounting clerks, elementary teachers, food servers, general office clerks, babysitters, and receptionists. These account for 32% of all occupations held by women in that year (Statistics Canada, 1998a).

In addition, women continue to earn less than men. Females' average income is still only 70% that of males'. Some 85.5% of males made $35,000 or more, and only 14.5% of women made

this amount (The Roeher Institute, 1993). Furthermore, women are more likely to be casual workers. Males are more likely to have full time jobs lasting six months or more (The Roeher Institute, 1993). Although part time work was increasing while full time work was decreasing for men more than women in 1995, women were still more likely to work part time than men that year. Some 12% of women and only 4% of men reported working part-time for the full year (Statistics Canada, 1998a).

4. Disability and Employment

4.1 Presence of Disability Affects Employment Level

The presence of disability has an impact on labour force participation (Table 7). People with disabilities are less likely to participate, have higher levels of unemployment, and lower employment-related earnings than those without disabilities.

The participation gap between people with and without disabilities in the labour force is beginning to narrow. The participation rate of people with disabilities increased from 62.2% to 69.6% of that for people without disabilities between 1986 and 1991(Fawcett, 1996).

Table 7 Employment status of working age Canadians with and without disabilities, by age (in percentages)

A. Source: HALS 1991

	Age	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
Persons without disabilities	15-34	70.1	9.8	20.2
	35-54	81.6	6.2	12.2
	55-64	55.1	5.7	38.2
Persons with disabilities	15-34	54.1	12.3	33.6
	35-54	57	7.6	35.4
	55-64	27.9	4.4	67.8

B. Source: NPHS 1994

	Age	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
Persons without activity restrictions	15-34	68.5	12.8	18.7
	35-54	81.4	6.4	12.1
	55-64	50.7	7.7	41.7
Persons with activity restrictions	15-34	58.9	13.3	27.8
	35-54	60.5	7.3	32.3
	55-64	28.6	3.8	67.6

Source: Crawford in Thornton and Lunt, 1997.

That having a disability means employment is less likely does not mean that disability is the only factor that accounts for low employment levels. The attitude that people with disabilities are "unemployable" because of disability is being replaced by a recognition that factors external to the person, such as the work environment, the broader policy and program environment, the pace of working and the attitudes of others are factors which create barriers and disincentives to employment.

HALS respondents who are not in the labour force provide a number of reasons for why they are not looking for work. Many suggest it is because of external factors, such as a fear of losing some or all of their current income and supports (Table 8). Some feel their condition completely prevents them from working, but among this group 67.7% cite one or more environmental factors that have discouraged them from seeking employment. In other studies, such as Gulik,

Table 8 Reasons why persons with disabilities who are not in the labour force are not looking for work (HALS 1991)

	Number	Per cent
All not in labour force	1004630	100.00
Would lose some or all of current income	198440	19.75
Would lose some or all of current additional supports	120105	11.96
Family or friends have discouraged looking for work	52835	5.26
Family responsibilities prevent looking for work	93065	9.26
Information about jobs is not accessible	54085	5.38
Worry about being isolated by other workers on the job	44015	4.38
Have been the victim of discrimination	68325	6.80
Feel training is inadequate	153005	15.23
Lack of accessible transportation	67570	6.73
No jobs are available	139475	13.88
Other reasons (various)	279935	27.86

Note: Some respondents gave more than one reason why they were not looking for work.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1993.

Yam and Touw's (1989) study of people with Multiple Sclerosis, respondents with disabilities have included symptoms of their condition as among the factors that impede their performance at work. In this study, however, such symptoms were included in context of the workplace environment (cited in Jongbloed 1996).

4.2 Employment Level Varies by Type of Disability

In 1991 seven broad disability types were identified by HALS. These include hearing, seeing, speaking, agility, mobility, mental/learning and unknown physical disabilities (reported having a physical limitation but did not identify limitations in specific areas). Labour force participation rates vary depending on the type of disability (Table 9). Both in 1986 and 1991 those with unknown physical disabilities and hearing disabilities had the highest labour force participation rates, while those with speaking and mobility disabilities had the lowest. (Fawcett, 1996). Other research (Jongbloed, 1996; Huang and Rubin, 1997) suggests that those with intellectual disabilities may have the lowest labour force participation rate. The unemployment rate of people with intellectual disabilities in the US is estimated at 58%. On the basis of a cross-tabulation using a HALS variable for respondents who self-reported as having been labelled as developmentally delayed or mentally retarded, it was found that only 38.1% were working in 1991.

Table 9 Labour force participation rate by type of disability in 1991

Speaking	41.8%
Mobility	43.0%
Seeing	45.6%
Agility	46.0%
Mental/learning	47.5%
Hearing	62.7%
Unknown	79.1%

Source: Fawcett, 1996.

These rates may be influenced by a number of factors. Some types of disability, such as hearing, are less likely to be associated with other disabilities. Persons with single disabilities are more likely to be in the labour force than those with multiple disabilities. Hearing and unknown

physical disabilities are also more likely to be mild disabilities. However these factors account for only some variation between disability types. When severity of disability is controlled, the variation narrows but differences in participation rates are still significant and remain in much the same pattern (Fawcett, 1996).

People with different types of disabilities experience different types and degrees of barriers in the workplace. The persons most likely to be employed are also the least likely to need accessible transportation, job redesign, or flexible work schedules (Fawcett, 1996). In addition, some kinds of disabilities are more visible than other, and public attitudes toward disability may vary according to type of disability. For example, people may have more negative attitudes about persons with intellectual disabilities working than persons who are visually or hearing impaired. As the other sections of this review reveal, these kinds of barriers have a large impact on employment.

4.3 Severity of Disability Affects Employment Levels

Severity of disability has a bearing on labour force participation (Table 10). The more severe a person's impairment, the less likely they are to be employed. In 1991 70.9% of people with mild disabilities, 44.8% of people with moderate disabilities and 25.6% of those with severe disabilities participated in the labour force (Fawcett, 1996). Those with moderate to severe levels of disability report high rates of discrimination—61.2% who believe they have been refused jobs because of disability have moderate to severe disabilities (The Roeher Institute, 1992).

The labour force participation rates of people with mild disabilities increased significantly between 1986 and 1991 from 59.4% to 70.9%.This may in part be due to the increase in numbers of people reporting mild disabilities. For people with moderate disabilities the increase was more modest, rising from 43.8% to 44.8%. For people with severe disabilities the increase was also modest, rising from 22.3% to 25.6%. It should be noted that for those with severe disabilities the increase was more related to being reclassified from *out of the labour force* to *unemployed*. Furthermore, those still classed as *not in the labour force* are people who have not been looking for work for a period of time. A proportion of these may be hidden unemployed who have become to discouraged to look for work though they would like to be employed (Fawcett, 1996).

Table 10 Labour force status of people with disabilities according to severity of disability, 1991

Severity	Employed	Unemployed	Participation rate	Not in labour force
Mild	62.1%	8.8%	70.9%	29.1%
Moderate	37.4%	7.4%	44.8%	55.2%
Severe	18.5%	7.2%	25.6%	74.4%

Source: Fawcett, 1996.

Severity of disability does not fully account for why people with disabilities as a group have low representation in the labour force, however (Jongbloed, 1996). Those with mild disabilities are still significantly disadvantaged. Of the non-disabled population 22.1% are not in the labour force, compared to 39.9% of people with mild disabilities (Roeher Institute, 1993).

4.4 Cause of Disability Is Linked to Labour Force Participation

The underlying cause of disability has an impact on labour force participation rates (Table 11). It should be noted that cause is linked to severity of disability, and those causes which have the highest rates of participation also frequently tend to result in milder forms of disability. The exception is in the case of disability caused by aging, who have relatively low participation and relatively mild disabilities. This may be because they choose early retirement (Fawcett, 1996). However, even when severity of disability is controlled, cause of disability has some impact on participation. People who are injured on the job are the most likely group (64.7%) to participate in the labour force. This may be because there are more employment-related services for this group, public and private insurance related rehabilitation programs to encourage this group to return to work, or because employers to feel an obligation to retain employees who became disabled because of their job (Fawcett, 1996).

Those with multiple causes (40.6%), or have disability caused by disease or illness (46.4%) are the least likely to participate in the labour force.

Table 11 Labour force participation rates of persons with disabilities, showing cause of disability in 1991

Work-related cause	64.7%
Undetermined cause	60.5%
Non-work accident	58.9%
Present since birth	56.7%
Aging	50.2%
Disease or illness	46.4%
Multiple causes	40.6%

Source: Fawcett, 1996.

4.5 Disability and No/Low Job Earnings

People with disabilities are poorer than other Canadians. They are less likely to be earning employment income, more likely to be relying on social assistance, and when they do work, they make less money than people without disabilities. This is especially true if they are female, visible minority or Aboriginal.

The Economic Well Being and Labour Market Activity of Persons with Disabilities in Canada (Hum and Simpson, 1993) provides a comparative Analysis of HALS 1986 and Labour Market Activity Survey (LMAS) 1989 data which looks at working age people with disabilities (Table 12). They show the employment incomes of working-age people with disabilities (including those who are limited at work and persons with disabilities in 13 selected categories) and people without disabilities. Persons with disabilities are roughly twice as likely as others to have no employment income. They are roughly one-half to two-thirds as likely to have employment incomes of $30,000 or higher.

Barnartt and Altman (1997) found that when controlling for other factors, wages for workers with impairments are $1300 less than those without impairments. The researchers note that these results may portray a more positive picture than expected for a number of reasons: it looks only at people with disabilities who have jobs; the people with disabilities in the sample were older on average, and may have had adult onset disabilities after establishing careers and seniority.

Table 12 Employment incomes of four groups

	Without disabilities (HALS)	With disabilities (HALS)	Disability in 13 categories (HALS)	With disabilities (LMAS)
Have no employment income	24.9%	54.8%	47.4%	59.5%
Make less than $5,000	15.8%	12.1%	13.3%	10.2%
Make between $5,000 and $10,000	13.6%	6.4%	7.2%	7.0%
Make between $10,000 and $20,000	18.3%	11.1%	12.1%	9.5%
Make between $20,000 and $30,000	14.9%	8.0%	10.1%	7.2%
Make over $30,000	15.1%	7.6%	9.9%	6.5%

Using data from the 1987 National Medical Expenditure Survey, Barnartt and Altman also found that the wages of people with hearing or visual impairments are actually higher than the wages of same gender workers without impairments, whereas the wages of workers with physical disabilities and multiple disabilities are lower. They offer a number of reasons why workers with sensory impairments earn more than workers with physical impairments, including: they tend to work more hours per week, are more highly educated and have higher occupational prestige rankings; and their disabilities tend to be less visible.

As in the non-disabled population, men with disabilities make more money than women with disabilities. Of people with disabilities earning $35,000 or more in 1985, 86% were males compared with 13.8% who were females (The Roeher Institute, 1993). Barnartt and Altman (1997) found that, gender differentials are far greater than impairment-related differentials, however. Controlling all other factors, both in the general population and among those with disabilities (except those with hearing impairments), Barnartt and Altman found that men make an average of $2,000 more in earnings than women. They found that the wages of women with disabilities are more similar to those of other women than men with disabilities. That is, women with and without disabilities make 63% what men make.

Having less money makes it less likely that a person can secure adequate employment. This is true for those without disabilities, and especially for those with disabilities. Persons with

disabilities enter a cycle of low income, lack of resources for further education and job retraining, poor health and unemployment. People with low socio-economic status are also at a disadvantage in preventing disability and in ameliorating its effects. They have higher rates of morbidity, mortality and disability (Smart and Wells, 1997).

4.6 Employment Rates Vary According to Gender

As with the larger population, the gender of persons with disabilities has a bearing on their labour market experiences. While unemployment rates for women and men without disabilities were very similar in 1991 at 9.9% and 9.7% respectively, women with disabilities experienced higher unemployment than men with disabilities. Sixteen per cent of women and 13.2% of men with disabilities active in the labour force were unemployed (Fawcett, 1996). The discrepancies between men and women are narrowing, however. The participation rates of women with disabilities in the labour force increased between 1986 and 1991 by 10.9 percentage points. Men with disabilities experienced less than half the growth in participation with an increase of 4.9 percentage points (Fawcett, 1996). While the gender gap is narrowing, increases in the participation of females with disabilities are dependent on their living situation, availability of support and age.

Traditional gender roles for men and women (e.g., women as homemakers, carers and nurturers, and men as breadwinners) have been changing over the past fifty years. Women's participation in the labour force has vastly increased overall over this period. However, gender roles continue to affect the nature of women's participation. Women are more likely to be in jobs that mimic their role in the home, as secretaries, nurses and teachers. This is true whether they have a disability or not. Among upper level managers who had disabilities in 1986, 93% were men, and only 6.92% were women. Among clerical workers with disabilities the majority (75.2%) were women, compared with 24.8% who were men (The Roeher Institute, 1993).

Issues of gender roles remain an area of concern, especially for women with disabilities. For many women, whether or not they participate in the labour force, they retain the bulk of responsibility for domestic responsibilities and child care. In her study of women and Multiple Sclerosis, Jongbloed (1996) found that for women with disabilities, domestic responsibilities and family support shaped women's employment decisions. Some stated that support at home

enabled them to stay employed full time, while others left employment or worked part time because they could not juggle their home and labour market responsibilities.

Other research contradicts this finding however. McDonough (1997), using HALS data, found that social roles affected women's perception of work disability in an opposite pattern. She found that women with long term physical or mental disabilities who had roles as mother or spouse were less likely to report a work disability. This was especially true for mothers with school aged children, and those with post-secondary educations. The reasons for the findings are unclear. Perhaps such women have a greater sense of their capabilities because of they are required to perform domestic duties for others. Maybe their children and spouses provide more domestic support than is the case for women who do not have spouses and children. Perhaps they have chosen not to participate in the labour force for reasons they attribute to social roles rather than to limitations arising from to their disability. In any case, as McDonough (1997) points out, little research exists which looks at the impact of women's social roles on their experiences of work disability.

Fawcett's (1996) finding regarding the impact of living arrangements on employment for both men and women with and without disabilities sheds some light on this question. While women without disabilities were more likely to work if they lived alone, HALS data shows that both women and men with disabilities were less likely to be in the labour force if they lived alone. 43.5% of women with disabilities who lived alone were in the labour force compared with 49.7% of those who lived with others. For men, 59.1% who lived alone were in the labour force compared with 66.4% of those who lived with others. Fawcett suggests that men and women with disabilities have more domestic responsibilities if they live alone, because those who live with others receive support from the people they live with.

Changing gender-role ideologies may have affected women's views on gender and labour market participation, but many older women may continue to hold traditional views that may have a negative impact on their involvement in the paid workforce. Fawcett found that the gender gap in labour force participation is widest in the oldest age groups. For the youngest group (age 15 to 24), the participation rates of men and women with disabilities are almost equal, the participation rate of women being about 96% that of men. As people age the gap widens. Among 25 to 44

year olds the participation rate of women was 81% that of men. Among those 45 to 54 this was down to 74%, and further down to 47% among those aged 55 to 64. For older women, their reduced chances for employment due to their age are further reduced by their gender (Fawcett, 1996).

4.7 Labour Force Participation Declines with Age

Regardless of gender, as people with disabilities age they are less likely to participate in the labour market. Nearly three-quarters of adults with disabilities between 55 and 64 years are not in the labour force. In this age group 56.2% are long term non-participants, compared with 31.7% of those who are in the 15 to 24 age group (The Roeher Institute, 1993).

People with disabilities who are most likely to participate in the labour force are between the ages 25 and 44 (68.6%). Those between ages 45 and 64 had the lowest rate (45.1%). It should be noted that for the youngest group, aged 15 to 24, if those who were going to school are not counted, their labour force participation rates jump to 73.9% for women and 70.5% for men in 1991 (Fawcett, 1996).

Participation in the labour force does not necessarily mean that a person has a job because the active labour force comprises both employed persons and job-seekers. While youth have the highest participation rate when educational enrolment is excluded, they also have the highest unemployment rate. Similarly, although older people with disabilities are least likely to participate in the labour market, they are more likely to be employed than younger persons if they do participate. Only 12.2% of 45 to 64 year old participants with disabilities are unemployed, compared to 14.7% of people aged 24 to 44, and 20.1% of youth aged 15 to 24 with disabilities (Fawcett, 1996).

Both the trend towards high unemployment among youth with disabilities and the low participation of aging people with disabilities exaggerate existing trends in the general population. Youth with disabilities must contend with high unemployment rates for their age group, regardless of disability, in addition to barriers related to disability. They are even more likely than their non-disabled peers to be unemployed.

The low labour force participation rates for older persons with disabilities have been attributed to a number of factors. Older people in general have a harder time reentering the labour market because of age-related discrimination. They are less likely to have, or less likely to be perceived as having, the kinds of skills needed in today's highly technological labour market. They may be less attractive in hiring as they approach the age of retirement. On top of these age related barriers, disabling conditions tend to become more prevalent and severe as people age. Some people may choose to retire rather than challenge barriers to employment. They are also more likely to work in industries that face a high incidence of plant closures. After failing to find a new job they tend to giving up the search (The Roeher Institute, 1993).

Withdrawal from the labour force may also be related to social attitudes about disability that are more prevalent among older generations. McDonough (1997) cites a wide range of research that links work-disability and age (i.e., Chirikos, 1986; Chirikos and Nickel, 1984; Greenblum, 1984; Reisine, Grady, Goodenow, & Fifield, 1989) explaining that "Some believe that social attitudes linking advancing age to declining work capacities encourages middle aged individuals with functional limitations due to poor health to underestimate their abilities and withdraw from the workforce ... [it] may also reflect the historical context in which different birth cohorts spent their formative adult years." This is especially true for older women, who are also effected by traditional views regarding gender and employment.

4.8 Age of Disability Onset Impacts on Employment

Jongbloed (1996) studied a sample of women with Multiple Sclerosis in Canada to identify factors associated with the employment status of women with MS. She found that employed women with MS tended to be younger than unemployed women (mean ages 39.6 and 43.3 respectively) and that employed women tended to be diagnosed younger than unemployed women (mean ages of diagnosis 31.2 and 33.5 respectively).

Gordon, Stoelb and Chiriboga (1997) cite Korblith, La Rocca, and Baum (1986) who say that people with MS may leave employment prematurely without consideration of job accommodations because of their uncertainty over the progression of the disease.

People who had their disability before completing their education are more likely to participate in the labour market (67.9%) than those who became disabled after they completed their education (52.7%). This may be because, at the age of disability onset, they are more likely than others to be young and to have the opportunity to plan for their futures. Then again, recognizing that they would have employment disadvantages due to disability, they may have taken steps to extend their education and training (Fawcett, 1996).

Jongbloed cites a number of studies which show that rates of unemployment for people with MS increase as the duration of the disease increases. For example, a German study by Bauer, Firnhaber and Winkler (1965) showed that percentage of unemployment for people with MS dropped from 75% after the first 5 years following the onset of symptoms, the 50% after 10 years and 13% after 15 years (Jongbleod, 1996). Kornblith, LaRocca and Baum (1986) found that seventeen years after onset of symptoms of MS only 27.2% were working, while 65.2% had been working when symptoms first appeared.

4.9 Geography Impacts on Employment

Where a person lives, whether in the city or the country, east coast or west, has an impact on the labour market conditions that they face, the rates of unemployment and the kinds of industries that dominate regional economies. McDonough (1997) suggests that availability of work has an effect on individuals self-perception of their ability to work. Two large US studies found that those living in rural areas were more likely to report work disability (Chirikos, 1986; and Luft, 1978.) Several studies have linked geographic region with disparity in the employment experiences of people with disabilities (Berkowitz, Johnson and Murphy, 1976; Chirikos, 1986; Greenwald et al. 1989, and Luft, 1978).

Employment rates of people with disabilities vary by province. One study found that people in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are more likely to be employed than those in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Quebec (The Roeher Institute, 1993). People are also more likely to work in cities. Sixty-eight per cent of the labour force with a usual place of work have jobs in a census metropolitan area (Statistics Canada, 1998a). People also experience work-related discrimination because of disability differently depending where they live. People with disabilities who are actively seeking employment or working are more likely to claim they have

been refused a job because of disability if they live in Quebec (9.6%) or British Columbia (9.7%) than if they live in Newfoundland (2%), for example. Similarly, those in rural areas are less likely to experience such discrimination (5.7%) than those in small towns and cities (6.3%) and in large cities (9%) (The Roeher Institute, 1992).

In addition, employment-related and disability-related policies and programs vary from province to province; the types of services, the amount of services and the accessibility of services also vary, depending on where a person lives. Rehabilitation services, for example, are more widely available in urban centres (The Roeher Institute, 1992). Types of transportation systems vary between city and the country, and between different metropolitan centres themselves. Availability of accessible transportation to get to and from work has a significant impact on people with disabilities in terms of access to employment. 1986 HALS data show that those in urban areas who face difficulties accessing transportation services tend not to be in the labour force. Without available transportation, people are limited in both their employment opportunities and in access to educational opportunities (The Roeher Institute, 1992).

Other differences between regions may also have a bearing on the employment transitions of people with disabilities. Public attitudes about disability and about the employment of people with disabilities may differ depending on where people live. Those living in the Yukon may have different ideas about disability than those in Ontario. Also, migration between provinces may be an area of importance. Some regions, such as farming communities in Saskatchewan or communities in the Atlantic provinces, experience the out-migration of young people to find jobs. This may be true for young people with disabilities as well.

4.10 Education, Training and Other Qualifications Affect Employment

Education has long been considered a high priority in Canada, and as the kinds of skills required in workplaces shift, even more emphasis is likely to be placed on educational attainment. Not everyone has equal access to education, however. As indicated elsewhere in this report, gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic status continue to have an impact on access to education.

For people with disabilities access to education has been a major issue as they have historically been excluded from regular classrooms at all levels. Interfacts Consulting (1994) cites the Study Group on Employment and Disability, 1990, who explain that many people with disabilities were left without minimum education requirements for training programs because they were educated in segregated educational systems where government-approved curricula did not apply. This resulted in both unemployment and to low employment-aspirations.

The situation is changing and improving as Education Ministries and educational institutions make commitments to inclusive education, and create initiatives to increase educational accessibility for people with disabilities. The struggle for full inclusion continues, however. In a study surveying 242 graduates or students of post-secondary study for the National Educational Association for Disabled Students (NEADS), the authors found that accessibility was an issue for students with disabilities, but that access varied from one school to the next. Respondents talked about the importance of finding a school that could meet both their academic needs and their disability-related needs. Students advise others with disabilities to assess and make early contact with the schools' services for people with disabilities before deciding if they will attend that school (Hubka and Killean, 1996).

As in the general population, the higher the educational attainment for people with disabilities, the more likely they are to be employed. Those with university education are the most likely to participate in the labour market (75%), while those with a primary education or less are least likely to participate (Fawcett, 1996), (Table 13).

Table 13 Labour force participation rates for people with disabilities by level of education in 1991

Primary or less	37.6%
Some secondary	50.5%
Secondary graduation	60.0%
Trades certificate	66.0%
Some post secondary	65.4%
College diploma	69.8%
University degree	73.0%

There is a persisting a gap between the labour force participation rates of people with and without disabilities, regardless of educational attainment. The gap narrows, however, as the level of education increases. For instance, of those with primary education or less, people with disabilities participate in the labour market at 59% the rate of those without disabilities. People with disabilities with some secondary education participate at 73% of the rate of persons without disabilities. This figure is 80% for those with university education (Fawcett, 1996).

Level of education is also linked to the chances that someone will experience discrimination in the hiring process. While comparatively few people with university education say they have been refused employment because of their disability, 32.7% of those with less than a grade 5 education, and similarly, 32.5% of those with trade certification feel they have recently been refused employment because of their disability (The Roeher Institute, 1992).

Although education is clearly an important factor in labour market participation, many people with disabilities say that their educational training has not been adequate in preparing them for the labour market. In the NEADS study of post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities, Hubka and Killean (1996) found that 45% of students surveyed felt that their program did not prepare them with all the training or education they would need for employment. The majority said they would continue to upgrade, either by going even further in post-secondary studies or by taking computer courses. There was a general feeling that continual upgrading was needed to be competitive in the labour force.

As much as traditional learning within the education system is important in terms of employment, other types of learning and knowledge also have an impact. The knowledge gained through work experience can be a vital element in a person's relationship to the labour market. However, as people with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to be long term non-participants in the labour force (34.6% compared with 16.4%), they are less likely to have recent work experience (The Roeher Institute, 1993).

This is a problem that may be lessening over time. In their study of post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities, Hubka and Killean (1996), found that most have work experience. Most of those not currently working had at least six months work experience. The majority of the 29% who did not have significant work experience were under the age of 25 and still at school. In addition, 40.6% had received work-related training. 82.8% of this group felt they had acquired useful skills during training, especially computer skills and people skills; 75.9% had volunteer experience, although less than half felt this would be useful in obtaining or performing in a job.

Not only is education important as a factor that increases the chances of employment, it is also a factor associated with the onset of disability. Health and literacy literature provide evidence that people with low literacy skills have more accidents, get sick more often and have a reduced lifespan. Because information about health and safety is generally available in written form, which is often difficult to understand, literacy has a greater impact on health than almost any other factor (Perrin, 1990). According to Smart and Wells (1997) education also plays a preventative and rehabilitative role; those who are well educated are less likely to become disabled from work-related accidents because they are less likely to work in physically demanding and dangerous jobs.

4.11 Higher Representation of Disability Exists in Some Occupations

People with disabilities are more likely to work in some types of occupations than others. They are more likely to be in agricultural, service and clerical occupations and less likely to be represented in managerial and professional jobs. This means they are more vulnerable to labour market changes (Interfacts Consulting Ltd, 1994) such as the increase in casual work. Type of occupation has an impact on whether persons with disabilities and others worked full or part time

in 1996. Part-time work is more prevalent among sales and service occupations (41%) and in jobs in the arts, recreation and cultural industries. (Statistics Canada, 1998a).

Analysis of Canadian Human Rights Commission files shows that people with disabilities are more likely to face discrimination in certain occupational categories. Unemployed semi-professionals and semi-skilled workers are more than twice as likely to be refused jobs because of their disability than job seekers in general. Other areas where discrimination is high include foremen/women, clerical workers, service workers and manual workers. This varies by gender however. Women, but not men with disabilities face a high levels of discrimination in skilled craft occupations, are more likely to be refused professional jobs than men, and are more likely to face discrimination n semi-professional, clerical, sales, service and semi-skilled jobs (The Roeher Institute, 1992).

4.12 Race, Disability and Multiple Disadvantages

Some research evidence suggests that people from visible minority backgrounds who have disabilities are more likely than others to encounter difficulties in the labour market. Most of the literature on race and disability is American, however.

In one US study, Smart and Walls (1997) reviewed the literature, finding that racial minorities may be more likely to have a disability because they are more likely to have low socio-economic status, to be employed in physically dangerous jobs, to lack health insurance coverage, and to have low educational attainment. They cite Olsen (1982) who showed that the accidental death rate of migrant Mexican American workers is four times the national average, and Zaldivar (1991) who suggests that while 81% of Whites are covered by health insurance, only 58% of Blacks, 54% of Mexican Americans and 51% of Puerto Ricans are covered.

African Americans are also more likely to be labelled as having a disability due to discrimination in testing when they are children in school. They are more likely to be labelled "mentally retarded" than white children (Table 14).

Table 14 Prevalence of selected disabilities in two population groups

Disability	African American	White
Mental retardation	26%	11%
Learning disability	43%	51%
Speech impairment	23%	30%

Source: Smart and Wells, 1997 – portion of table p. 12.

People of colour are also less likely to have access to high levels of educational attainment. Because of systemic discrimination, many non-White groups have fewer years of schooling than the general US population. This is especially true for African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans (Smart and Wells, 1997).

Many people with disabilities need access to vocational, rehabilitation, assistive device, personal support and other services in order to overcome barriers to employment. Canadians who are visible minorities and have disabilities face barriers in access to such services based on race and disability. This double discrimination means many agencies that deal with issues of race and ethnicity are inaccessible to people with disabilities, and many disability organizations cater a white population and may not understand the needs of, or may even have overt prejudices toward, racial and ethnic minorities (Hanes, 1996).

This situation has been changing in recent years however. Hanes (1996) points to a number of organizations that deal with the needs of multi-racial and multi-ethnic people with disabilities. These include The Quebec Multi-Ethnic Association for the Integration of Handicapped People and The Ethno-Racial Persons with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO). In addition, previously existing organizations such as Disabled Persons Resource Centre in Ottawa and the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres are beginning to develop programs and research projects which specifically address the needs of people who are visible minorities and have disabilities.

Lack of access to services may be of particular concern for First Nations people with disabilities, especially those who live on reservations or in isolated rural communities. Canadian data on the situation of people with disabilities living on reservations is limited. US researchers Pichette,

Berven, Menz and La Fromboise (1997), however, found that First Nations people with disabilities experience barriers to accessing employment services, especially in the areas of vocational rehabilitation, transportation, job training, employment opportunities and health care. In the United States, services are provided to First Nations' peoples through complex, multi-level government system, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, local tribal agencies and non-tribal agencies. The authors suggest that many First Nations people with disabilities may be unaware of available services. A history of economic dependency, psychological depression and poverty may prevent access to services because of passive resistance or hopelessness (Pichette, Berven, Menz and La Fromboise, 1997).

While people with disabilities may face multiple disadvantages if they have a visible minority-group background, people from low socio-economic backgrounds are also more likely to become disabled than those from dominant, economically advantaged groups. The former are more likely to be working in occupational categories that are physically dangerous, such operators, fabricators, and labourers and service occupations which include, respectively occupations from machine operators, assembly line workers, truck drivers, and material handlers to food service, building maintenance, cleaning, protective services and security work. They are less likely to work in managerial and professional specialty occupations like executives, administrators, engineers, health specialists, and teachers. They have less money to secure health care services or job retraining. They are at increased risk of entering a cycle of disability, low income, lack of resources for further education, poor health and unemployment (Smart and Wells, 1997).[6]

4.13 Employer Attitudes Are a Critical Factor

Having the understanding and support of an employer is important for workers with disabilities, especially if they need workplace accommodations of some sort. According to one study, women with Multiple Sclerosis who are working report that employer attitude is the most important condition enabling them to work (Jongbloed, 1996).

[6] Smart and Wells (1997) cite research which indicates that people of colour are less likely than whites to have health insurance (Ginzberg, 1992; Himmelstein, Woolhandler and Wolfe, 1992; Trevino, Moyer, Valdez and Stroup-Benham, 1992; LaPlante, 1993). People who do not have insurance are less likely to see physicians, thus increasing the chance of becoming disabled or of conditions worsening, or developing secondary conditions and increasing their disability.

Although social attitudes about disability are changing, the attitudes of employers regarding hiring people with disabilities remains a barrier to employment for this group. HALS data shows that 15.8% of adults with disabilities who are actively looking for jobs feel they have been refused work because of their disability. Twenty-six point six per cent of those who are not in the labour force but have looked for work in the last two years believe this to be true (The Roeher Institute, 1992). Respondents in the NEADS study say they experience the "attitudes of others" as a barrier in the job search. Although 51.6% of students in the NEADS study said they had not experienced discrimination because of their disability while looking for work, 33.4% reported being refused employment because of disability.

Employer attitudes create barriers to employment in a number of ways. They often lack knowledge about disability and about job accommodations, despite the existence of services such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), which is mandated to provide employers the information they need (HRDC, 1997). Students in the NEADS reported several different types of employer discrimination. They describe incidents of being refused employment because of disability, and being refused promotions and access to training programs. They say they may receive less pay than others. Some claim to have been fired specifically due to disability (Hubka and Killean, 1996).

People with different disabilities may have different experiences of discrimination by employers. For people with intellectual disabilities, for example, employers' unfavourable attitudes are among the greatest barriers to employment they face. Employers tend to have low job performance expectations regardless of demonstrated capability to do the job or the level of job requirements (Schloss and Soda, 1989; and Millington, Szymanski and Hanley-Maxwell, 1994). Employer attitudes reflect a more general societal perception that people with disability are incapable of fully participating in society, including in employment (Hahn, 1985; Kilbury, Neshoff and Rubin, 1992; Huang and Rubin, 1997).

The NEADS study shows that people with learning disabilities are less likely to experience discrimination than those with sensory impairments. For example, while 60.7% of those with learning disabilities report never having experienced discrimination, this is true for only 39.1% of those who are blind or visually impaired (Hubka and Killean, 1996). In contradiction to this finding, however, Clausen (1997) found that employers do not express positive attitudes about hiring people with learning disabilities, although they do regarding people with physical disabilities. The reason given is that many employers do not understand hidden disabilities, are inexperienced with and lack knowledge about learning disabilities.

4.14 Access to Supports and Services Affects Employment

The availability of required support is a factor that influences labour force participation, particularly among persons with severe disabilities. According to HALS, 1991, many people with disabilities (31.2%) say they require support of some kind in the job. Of those who do not require support 56.8% are employed, compared to only 29% of people who do require employment support of some kind (Table 15).

The kinds of workplace support most commonly required, according to 1991 HALS data, are job redesign (16.9%) and flexible hours (17.3%). The least commonly needed supports include technical aids/devices (1.8%), and communication services (1.5%) (Crawford, 1998). These findings are supported by Jongbloed's study of Canadian women with Multiple Sclerosis (1996); Gordon, Stoelb and Chiriboga's (1997) findings on the types of accommodation needed by working people with Rheumatoid Arthritis and Systemic Lupus Erythematosus; and Hubka and Killean's (1996) study for the National Education Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) on post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities in Canada. In the NEADS study 69.5% of respondents said they are limited in the amount or kind of work they can do. The types of accommodations they said they require include: modified hours (22%); adaptation of work circumstance or special equipment (73%). The type of equipment most frequently required were technical aids such as voice synthesizers, TDD and computers. Respondents also cited job redesign, accessible transportation, and physical modifications of the workplace (48%).

Table 15 Employment support requirements of working age persons with disabilities, showing per cent employed by type of support, and availability of support to those working and who need support (HALS 1991)

Kind of support required *	Per cent of working age persons with disabilities who require support	Per cent of persons needing support who are employed	Per cent of employed persons needing support who have the required support available
No supports required	68.8	56.8	–
One or more supports needed	31.2	29	–
- Human support	3.4	27	53.4
- Technical aids/devices	1.8	42.6	41.2
- Communication svcs	1.5	35.4	11
- Job redesign	16.9	25.7	64.5
- Modified hours/days	17.3	22.5	64.1
- Accessible transportation	6.9	19.3	50.2
- Other non-architectural	3.6	41.4	51.2
- Handrails, ramps	4.8	20.1	71.9
- Appropriate parking	5.1	20.8	68
- Accessible elevator	6	17	66.6
- Accessible workstation	5.4	17.9	68.8
- Accessible washrooms	4.5	19.6	73.8
- Other architectural	1.4	39	49.8

* Some respondents indicated the need for more than one type of support.
Source: Crawford in Thornton and Lunt, 1997.

While the need for workplace-modifications reduces labour force participation in general, specific types of accommodation required also have an impact on labour force participation rates: of those who need accessible transportation 25.2% are in the labour force compared to 55.9% of those who do not; 36.1% of those who require job redesign are in the labour force, compared to 57.5% of those who do not; 28.6% of those who require modified work hours or days are in the labour force compared to 60.1% of those who do not (Fawcett, 1996).

Hubka and Killean (1996) found that students who require some form of adaptation or special equipment in order to work are also more likely to feel discouraged from looking for work: 76.7% of students who felt discouraged needed such adaptations. The students frequently indicate they feel discouraged because they lack the appropriate education or training, or because they feel uncertain about their physical capabilities.

The general need for support in everyday activities (e.g., for meal preparation, shopping, household chores, personal care) has an impact both on labour force participation, and on self-perception of ability to work. A high proportion of those who say they cannot work do not receive the level of support they need in daily living (The Roeher Institute, 1993).

Whether or not a person receives the kind of support they need depends in part on the kind of support they require. Working-age Canadians requiring technical aids and devices are far more likely to receive such items (74.7%) than those who need formal care for daily living (33.3%) (The Roeher Institute, 1992). Only 29.2% of those who require personal support in daily living activities are employed and of these people only 1.6% receive assistance from someone on the job. The reason for this is that funding for such supports on the job is discretionary, frequently available only on a short term basis under Vocational Rehabilitation and social assistance programs. People requiring such services and who are attached to the social assistance system are often blocked from employment because, in order to qualify for the services, they must be deemed unemployable. In many cases employers and employees are left with the responsibility of covering costs (The Roeher Institute, 1992). Departmental responsibility for the provision of publicly-funded supports varies, depending on the supports needed, and the province or territory in which a person lives; in some cases, responsibility for support provision is not clear. As a result of such factors, many people's need for support in the workplace and at home or at school goes unmet.

Getting to and from work is another issue. Many people with disabilities, particularly those with mobility concerns, require some form of accessible transportation. Availability of such services varies, however. In a Vancouver-based study, 68% of employed persons with disabilities used their private vehicle to get to work; 13% used local public transit; and 7% walked to work; 7% who were not in the labour force cited lack of accessible transit as a barrier to employment

(Interfacts Consulting, 1994). The latter figure may be low as compared with other cities because Vancouver has a relatively accessible public transportation system: BC Transit has provided lift-equipped busses on most Major Transit Routes in the Lower Mainland; Seabus and Skytrain are wheelchair accessible; door-to-door service is provided by HandyDART vans, as well as private taxi companies (Interfacts Consulting, 1994). In Toronto, on the other hand, generic transportation services are widely inaccessible. The Toronto Transit Commission is expected to eventually make subways, buses and streetcars wheelchair accessible, but for the time being people with disabilities must rely on the TTC Wheeltrans service, which allows for little flexibility, or private taxi companies. Those who live in small towns and rural areas may have no access to accessible transportation services.

People who use rehabilitation services are more likely to be employed; when employees become disabled, the sooner they begin rehabilitation, the sooner they are likely to return to the workforce. Persons with severely disabling conditions who frequently participate in rehabilitation activities such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy are more likely to be employed and are less likely to consider themselves unable to work. (The Roeher Institute, 1993). Rehabilitation options have been criticized, however. For instance, a high proportion of funding for rehabilitation services for persons with mental health conditions is channelled to institutionalized services (The Roeher Institute, 1992), which effectively takes many people who need the services out of the community and out of the labour market. Rehabilitation facilities for physical disabilities tend to be concentrated in large urban centres (Interfacts Consulting, 1994); workers in rural areas who become disabled have less access to rehabilitation services and frequently have to relocate to cities. The services can accept only a limited number of people; accordingly, both in cities and in the country, only a small share of people with disabilities use rehabilitation services (The Roeher Institute, 1993).

5. Summary of Findings

The background review of the literature concerning notions of disability and approaches to measurement found the following:

- There is no single, universally recognized concept of "disability" but instead many different ways of understanding the phenomenon. Dominant societal approaches to thinking about disability inform the design of social programs that are intended to address disability issues.

- The "individual pathology" approach to disability, based on biomedical and functional models, is giving way in some quarters to approaches that recognize the role of individuals' immediate environments and social structures in aggravating restrictions of everyday activity.

- Major data sources that can be tapped for information on disability-related issues are the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS), the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) and the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID). Each of the surveys have unique strengths and limitations. The sub-sample sizes for the "disabled" population are significantly different across HALS, NPHS and SLID. Weighted estimates of the number of adults in Canada with disabilities or activity restrictions also vary significantly across the surveys.

- HALS is the most useful instrument for shedding light on a wide range of issues that affect people with disabilities, but is less useful concerning some labour market issues. SLID is an extremely useful instrument for examining labour market and income issues, but has little information specific to disability. The NPHS has limited information on disability, labour market issues and income but has a comparatively large sample of respondents with activity restrictions, rendering it more useful in some regards than SLID, especially for examining correlations between health-status indicators, disability and employment.

The literature review found the following in terms of the general demographics of disability in Canada:

- Persons with disabilities make up a large and growing share of the Canadian population.

- The prevalence of disability varies by geographic region.
- Disability increases as people age.
- The prevalence of disability is roughly similar for males and females, excepting that the prevalence among post-retirement females is higher than among post-retirement males.
- Although some research suggests that the prevalence of disability is higher among visible minority groups, scant Canadian research has been conducted on the issue.
- People with disabilities are more likely than others to be poor.
- As a group, people with disabilities have lower educational attainment than others.

In terms of broad societal trends that affect employment for people with and without employment, the research identified the following factors that need to be taken into account when framing research into the labour market transitions of people with disabilities:

- Global competition is resulting in restructured job opportunities and job requirements for workers, generally.
- Downsizing is affecting workers in general, resulting in high levels of unemployment and underemployment.
- Sectors of job growth are changing, resulting in fewer people working in the resource and manufacturing sectors and more people working in traditional and non-traditional service industries.
- Skill requirements are changing; jobs increasingly favour workers with strong computer, math and literacy skills. Increasing years of schooling are required for the employment that is available. Unemployed persons who do not have such skills and educational backgrounds are disadvantaged in terms of their job prospects.
- Increasingly, labour is becoming feminized in some sectors of the service economy, resulting in low-status, low-paid and low-skilled work in those sectors.

- Work arrangements are changing, with part-time, short-term, contract and other sorts of casual labour becoming more common. Non-standard, contingent labour makes up about two-fifths of the Canadian labour market.

- Labour market conditions vary considerably from province to province and across rural and urban areas of the country, resulting in significantly different participation rates, rates of employment and of unemployment that depend on geographic location.

- Race and gender continue to be factors associated with persisting economic disadvantage, although the gap in employment between males and females has been narrowing since 1960.

Concerning disability and employment the research found the following:

- The presence of disability affects employment: people with disabilities are much less likely than others to be employed and tend to have lower job earnings. However, persons with early onset disabilities fare comparatively well in employment. The gap in labour force participation between people with and without disabilities is narrowing.

- Disability is not the only factor that determines employment. A range of environmental barriers and disincentives discourage people with disabilities from looking for jobs. Many people say that they are not looking for work out of concern about losing income support and other supports such as housing or drug plans. Many people have also become discouraged because they feel that their training is inadequate.

- The level of employment depends to some extent on the specific type of disability, with people who have hearing impairments comparatively well represented in the labour market and people with disabilities of speech faring comparatively poorly. Persons with specific cognitive disabilities (e.g., developmental disabilities) are also significantly under-represented in the labour force.

- The level of employment depends to a significant extent on the severity of disability: the less severely disabled, the more likely a person is to have a job. However, even persons with only mild levels of disability are significantly under-represented in employment.

Researchers have pointed to factors other than severity of disease and disability that help account for the labour market disadvantage, such as lack of access to adequate kinds and levels of support.

- Participation in the labour market depends to some extent on the cause of disability: people whose disabilities are work-related are more likely to be active in the labour force than people whose disabilities are caused by other factors. People whose disabilities were caused by several factors are among those who are least likely to be active in the labour force.

- People with disabilities who are working tend to earn less than other workers. People with low socio-economic status are at a disadvantage in preventing disability and in ameliorating its effects. They have higher rates of morbidity, mortality and disability.

- Women with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than men with disabilities. The employment gap between men and women with disabilities is narrowing. However, men with disabilities earn more money than women with disabilities: working males are more than four times more likely than females with disabilities to be represented among workers who have earnings of $35,000 or more. Regardless of disability, working women are more likely than men to be in jobs that mimic their role in the home (e.g., as secretaries, nurses and teachers). The gender gap in labour force participation is widest in the 55-64 age group age group, where the participation rate of women is less than one-half that of males.

- As people with disabilities age they are less likely to participate in the labour market. Nearly three-quarters of adults with disabilities between 55 and 64 years are not in the labour force. People with disabilities who are most likely to participate in the labour force are between the ages 25 and 44 (68.6%). The unemployment rate among those active in the labour force, however, is relatively high for young persons with disabilities: only 12.2% of 45 to 64 year old participants with disabilities are unemployed, compared with 20.1% of participating youth aged 15 to 24 with disabilities.

- Age of disability onset affects employment: people who have their disability before completing their education are more likely to participate in the labour market (67.9%) than those who become disabled after they complete their education (52.7%).

- Some research suggests that the duration of disability affects employment in the sense that the longer the duration the less likely that the person will be working.

- Employment rates of people with disabilities vary by province, with people with disabilities who live in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta being more likely to be employed than those in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, or Quebec. The availability of services that may function as a necessary condition of employment for some persons (e.g., rehabilitation, accessible public transportation) also varies by geographical location, with urban centres more likely to have such services than rural areas.

- As in the general population, the higher the educational attainment for people with disabilities, the more likely they are to be employed. Those with university education are the most likely to participate in the labour market (75%), while those with a primary education or less are least likely to participate (37.6%).

- There is a persisting a gap between the labour force participation rates of people with and without disabilities, regardless of educational attainment. The gap narrows, however, as the level of education increases. Some researchers have found that many people with disabilities believe their education and training has not adequately prepared them for employment. As people with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to be long term non-participants in the labour force, they are less likely to have recent work experience and work-based training. Low education has been associated not only with low employment but also with increased chances of acquiring a disability: health and literacy literature provide evidence that people with low literacy skills have more accidents, get sick more often and have a reduced lifespan.

- People with disabilities who are working are more likely to be in agricultural, service and clerical occupations and are less likely to be represented in managerial and professional jobs. Canadian Human Rights Commission files shows that unemployed semi-professionals and semi-skilled workers with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be refused jobs because of their disability than job seekers in general. Other areas where disability-related

discrimination is high include jobs for foremen/women, clerical workers, service workers and manual workers. This varies by gender however.

- Some research evidence suggests that people from visible minority backgrounds who have disabilities are more likely than others to encounter difficulties in the labour market. Racial minorities may also be more likely to have a disability because of they are more likely to have low socio-economic status, to be employed in physically dangerous jobs, to lack adequate health-insurance coverage, and to have low educational attainment. Canadians from visible minorities and who have disabilities face barriers based on race and disability in terms of their access to vocational, rehabilitation, assistive device, personal support and other services needed for employment.

- Employer attitudes are critical to whether people with disabilities can secure employment. However, a significant share of adults with disabilities who are actively looking for jobs feel they have been refused work because of their disability. An even higher share who are not in the labour force but have looked for work in the last two years believe this to be true.

- The need for work-related support is a factor that influences the labour force participation of persons with severe disabilities. According to HALS, 1991, many people with disabilities (31.2%) say they require support of some kind in the job. Of those who do not require support 56.8% are employed, compared to only 29% of people who do require employment support of some kind. The kinds of workplace support most commonly required are job redesign (16.9%) and flexible hours (17.3%). Among the least commonly needed supports are technical aids/devices (1.8%) and communication services (1.5%).

- The specific types of accommodation required have an impact on labour force participation rates. For example, of those who need accessible transportation 25.2% are in the labour force compared to 55.9% of those who do not; 36.1% of those who require job redesign are in the labour force, compared to 57.5% of those who do not; 28.6% of those who require modified work hours or days are in the labour force compared to 60.1% of those who do not. The need for and availability of support for daily living also has an impact both on labour force participation, and on self-perception of ability to work.

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